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Loree, Leonor Fresnel

Address of
Mr. L.F. Loree, president...

New York City

1928

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Box 255

ADDRESS OF MR. L. F. LOREE, PRESIDENT,
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK,
AT THE 160th ANNUAL BANQUET OF THE CHAMBER,
WALDORF-ASTORIA, NEW YORK CITY,
NOVEMBER 15, 1928

I have thought it might be of interest if I made some reference to the character of the work for which the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York holds itself responsible. I have selected two subjects upon which its committees on National Defence, on Aviation, and on Internal Trade and Improvements have as yet expressed no opinion, and with which I shall deal as an individual and in no way officially.

There are in the world millions of men—almost two thousand millions of them. Let us consider for a moment the environment in which they live and the effect of that environment upon their destinies.

There is a considerable population living in the regions of low temperatures—Eskimos and others. Conditions there reduce the activities of these people to the mere effort to support life to the exclusion of everything else. There is a considerable population living in the desert lands, mostly in high temperatures, such as the Hottentots and the Buriats. Here, also, the environment reduces them to a matter of maintenance. In the equatorial circle, with its intense heat, great humidity, much fungi, many insects and birds, and luxuriant plant growth, there are two or three hundred millions of people whose chief instrument of production is the hoe, calling for work far harder than that of the farmer of cooler regions. These peoples—all of them—have practically no margin beyond mere maintenance.

When we get away from these three extreme conditions, we come into a population of some seven hundred millions who are rice producers and rice eaters, cultivating little patches of ground, often as small as two acres to the family, living on a vegetable diet, produced almost exclusively by hand labor, who have but a small advantage, though a very definite one, over those in the worse condition.

The fact seems to be, and it is a very melancholy one, that, if

relatively small areas be disregarded, the continents of Europe and North America, compared with the rest of the surface of the earth, hold by far the greatest promise for the human race. These lands are occupied, generally speaking, to the exclusion of all others by the white peoples.

I have often wondered why, out of the vast mass of these so unfortunately situated, the Socialists, from their seething passion—for they have never been able to formulate a philosophy—did not make a selection for the purpose of uplift, instead of concentrating their frantic efforts on pulling down the best society that mankind has so far been able to evolve. Are we left to infer that the Socialists are actuated not so much by altruism as by envy and malice? (Applause)

Of all these people, fortunate and unfortunate, the outstanding characteristic is that, as human beings, they are so full of human nature—that they are so given over to pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth, murder, oppression of the poor, defrauding laborers of their wages, jealousy, suspicion and superstition. These blind deities govern, to an incredible degree, Christians, Jews, Turks, Infidels and Heathens alike. So much so that the morals of the world seem sometimes waif as a stray cat.

There are, of course, countervailing virtues. To insure the control of man in the interest of the virtues, we resort to systems of government by rewards and punishments. Rewards few and meager; punishments many and heavy. This instrument of control, when seen at its best, reflects a settled order based upon the institution of the family, the institution of private property and the authority of a government founded upon justice and morals. Such a government we have enjoyed as a heritage from our fathers for more than a century and a half. But the Government rests always upon the element of force; we hold our lives, our properties, and our religion itself through the policeman, the jail and the gallows.

With universal recognition of the necessity of an ultimate appeal to force to preserve peace and order within the nation's boundaries, it seems odd that any should raise a question as to the necessity for a similar force to protect the nation against its neighbors. Is it not strange that there should be failure or deliberate unwillingness to recognize that those things that are handled by the policeman and the courts locally are, in essence, exactly the things that are handled by the army and navy as

against the foreigners? Perhaps no nation stands so much in need of a recognition of this necessity for armed protection as does the United States, and perhaps no nation has, since the warnings of Washington, turned so resolutely away from its serious consideration. Let us remember the counsel of the Yellow Knife Indian—"It will be time enough for the warrior to throw away his gun when the squaw casts away her papoose."

Contrast our experience with a country less fortunately situated. As Faure has pointed out, the geographical situation of France makes her the crossroads of the peoples of the West. Since the beginnings of history the hordes from the great steppes which reach from the Vistula to the Amur unceasingly threatened her or actually crossed the Rhine to burn her towns and mow down her harvests to the rhythm of their hymns of war. Her western coasts lie on the route of the Northmen in their descent to the southern seas and overlook, like an offered prey, from the high cliffs of Brittany, where the pirates who bear in their hearts the poetry of the waves and the stars, are watching for the passage of fishing boats and ships of war. From the corridors of the Pyrenees from time immemorial there have poured out on to her plains Numidians, Carthaginians, Iberians, Arabs, in search of oases and flocks to seize and minarets to erect above the waters and the palms. Her southern coasts constantly saw appearing from the direction of the rising sun the blue, green, red and orange sails beneath which Phoenician sailors watched the young girls grouped around the bathing places, meaning to capture them with violence or to exchange for them dazzling carpets, glassware or little images. And in more modern years, time after time her fields have been overrun by foreign foes.

Contrast, I say, her experience with that of our own city whose streets have not echoed the tramp of hostile foot since the evacuation in 1783.

What then is really our situation? If the recent war has taught us anything it should be that, while large bodies of troops may be raised and even trained in a short time, the art of command and staff work in the field requires years of preparation. For us this lesson cries out for security against surprise and an area for practice maneuvers in the field of probable operations. Perhaps the greatest line of military weakness of the United States runs from the Chesapeake Bay to Lake Erie. Failure to hold that line would so divorce the manufacturing plants from the sources of

raw material, would so separate those living in the Atlantic States from their food supplies as to virtually paralyze the nation.

After the war of 1871, France undertook to protect its Eastern frontier by the erection of a system of fortifications, of which Verdun was the hinge, and which came to be known as the Grand Crown of Nancy. This barrier was so strong as to force the last invasion of France to be effected through Belgium, nor was the barrier overrun by all the efforts directed against it. Is it not of vital importance that we undertake a similar development of military defense of our line of military weakness? Such fortifications would, of course, be purely a defensive measure, but would be effective as nothing else could be in serving notice upon all that these United States are not an inviting object of buccaneering invasion.

The first line for the defense of the nation is, of course, the navy. For the defense of the Gulf of Mexico and the eastern end of the Panama Canal, a naval base has been established at Guantanamo, Cuba. For the defense of the North Atlantic coast, the naval bases are Norfolk, Virginia, Newport, Rhode Island, and New York. The facilities at Norfolk and Newport are, let us hope, adequate; certainly they permit of satisfactory expansion. The facilities at New York are quite inadequate and need resolute attention.

Supplementing the ocean as the natural home of the navy, there should be inland waterway communication between Norfolk and Boston. The Federal Government now owns the Cape Cod Canal, about eight miles long, with a navigable depth of 25 feet, the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, about 14 miles long, with a navigable depth of 12 feet, while surveys have been made for a canal across New Jersey connecting the waters of the Delaware and Raritan Rivers, 31 miles long and 12 feet deep, with masonry built for further deepening to 27 feet. It has, therefore, been found practicable, at a reasonable outlay, to provide the inland waterway so essential to our primary defense. Work should be constantly pressed to this end and no year should pass without substantial progress being made. Let us never forget the old proverb, "Sweat saves blood."

I would not be understood as belittling the efforts of diplomacy in the avoidance of the causes of war—notably, the anti-war treaties, which are so great a triumph of the present Federal administration. (Applause) Always we may count upon a saving

remnant with strong and delicate imagination, moral sensitiveness and spirituality who in times of moral crisis, by their surer instinct, save us if we are to be saved. Let us give them our whole-hearted support, but let us be wise in our day and generation and not put our trust in them alone.

Having for ourselves, so far as our outlook permits, insured domestic tranquility and provided for common defense, which are among the reasons given in the preamble of the Federal Constitution for its establishment, what may we do to secure for ourselves the necessities of a comfortable existence?

The great underlying purpose of civilization is to overcome nature. Quite as definitely as elsewhere in the world, our population is circumscribed by its physical geography. For us here on the Atlantic seaboard, the outstanding feature is the range of the Appalachian Mountains, separating us from the Mississippi Valley and in which, from the shores of Lake Ontario to the Gulf of Mexico, there is no water gap. Crossing it we must mount into the clouds. Usually an elevation in excess of 2,000 feet must be overcome.

Of the freight moving across this high mountain range, four tons come East to every ton that goes West. Every American is familiar with the anxiety of England as to her geographical situation and the recognition that is in the forefront of all her thought of the necessity of maintaining her overseas communications in order that she may have food for her people and raw material for her workers. But England is no more dependent upon the countries overseas than is the Atlantic seaboard on the region beyond the Alleghenies. Yet we seem oblivious to the hazards threatening our prosperity and growth.

Kipling has remarked that perhaps no great nation ever perished save through a failure to handle its transportation. What, then, are the transportation resources of which we have not yet availed?

In overcoming this barrier of nature (the Alleghany Mountains), two notable additions to our present facilities are possible. We should never cease the effort to bring them both into our service. First, the canal joining the Hudson River and the Great Lakes, which Governor CLINTON projected as long ago as 1810, which was opened for operation in 1825, and which has since been improved to a depth of twelve feet. In considering canalization, the matter should be freed from international considerations; from a by-product use in the generation and distribution of elec-

tric current, and other extraneous suggestions. While hydroelectric machinery has been brought almost to perfection, transmission losses seriously circumscribe the area to be supplied with current and already this field, so far as it may be reached from the St. Lawrence River, is over-supplied.

The primary question is, the canal being completed, what use can be made of it? Because of greater draft, fewer hatches, the longer time to load and unload, the larger crew, and the difficulties of navigation, ocean-going craft cannot be expected to go to the Great Lakes. What must happen is that Lake ships, now standardized to a draft of 21 feet, will come down to tidewater.

The outstanding physical features of the several routes now regarded as possible are as follows:

Route	Length (miles)	Rise and fall	No. Locks	Length long levels (miles)
St. Lawrence	373.35	565.6	22	321
Via Oswego	365.89	816.6	28	229
Improved Barge Canal.....	339.00	565.6	18	187

The studies so far made seem to have been confined to the first two indicated routes. I have wondered why serious consideration has not been given to the further improvement of the Barge Canal. By lowering the level of Oneida Lake three feet, raising the level between locks 23 and 24 four feet, and lowering the level between locks 24 and 25 five or six feet, there would be eliminated three locks and a continuous level stretch of 63 miles would be obtained. By not too heroic work the height of land east of Oneida Lake could be cut through and the new Oneida Lake level brought east to Little Falls, eliminating five locks and further increasing the length of this level stretch to 124 miles. The advantages of an improved Barge Canal route are such that no study of the problem can ignore them. I can make no attempt here to cover the great problem in all its aspects, but I may further suggest that consideration must be given to the conditions that will prevail when tidewater is reached.

Coming then into the ports of the Hudson and East Rivers the commerce of the Great Lakes will meet the commerce of the world. From this port there are regular sailings made by 522 steamship lines, reaching 24 cities of the United States and 77 foreign countries; reaching, in other words, the entire world. And

this traffic rapidly increases—since the beginning of the century, in shipping tonnage, 2.6 times; in export and import tonnage, 3.5 times—while, with the intercoastal canal, inland navigation will be provided to Boston on the North and to Beaufort, N. C., on the South.

Second: Quite as notable as the possibilities of the development of deep waterways is that of a specialized railway. There was introduced in Congress on April 21, 1874, a bill looking to a new trans-Alleghany railroad. It was considered by the Committee on Railways and Canals, Mr. HURLBUT, Chairman, which reported favorably a bill, House of Representatives H. R. 1194, to charter a double track freight railway company from tidewater on the Atlantic to Council Bluffs on the Missouri River. The road was located across the Alleghenies at an elevation more than four hundred feet lower than that usually obtained and the distance to Pittsburgh was shortened by eighty and to Chicago by one hundred miles, while the line was laid to a very low grade, now determined as fifteen feet to the mile. Since this report railroad construction has restricted the area to be considered to that between the Delaware and Allegheny Rivers. Such a highway is of vital importance to the Atlantic seaboard and the wisdom of Congress in pronouncing in its favor should go far to safeguard its construction and insure that it is a resource held in reserve to be used the moment it becomes a necessity.

In discussing the project the Committee reported to Congress that: "The questions naturally arising from the consideration of this bill and others of like character are so large in their possibilities, so vast in results, and so deeply affecting the growth and profitable development of important portions of the country, that they deserve deliberate and candid consideration, not only by the representatives of the people, but by the people themselves. * * * The existing trunk roads leading from the Atlantic to the West were not constructed for economy in operation as freight roads. They were built in the first instance as local roads, with reference to local interests, and not at all as their managers would now locate and build them, to secure and supply adequate means for freight traffic. * * *

"The remedy, it appears to your Committee, for existing evils most easy and expeditious in its results of any proposed, and reaching with its direct benefits to the whole region between the Ohio River and the Lakes, as well as the entire West, now sub-

sidiary to St. Louis and Chicago, is the building of a double-track railroad whose main line shall have its eastern terminus on the waters of New York harbor. * * * All considerations seem to point with inevitable certainty to the selection of New York harbor as the eastern terminus of any great freight road, while at the same time communications from the main line of the road proposed can readily and economically be made with New England, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. * * *

"After all is done that can in reason be expected to be done by the United States in improving and supplementing our wonderful system of inland water-communication, there remains the undeniable fact that a very large part of the most productive land destined to be filled up with a vast population is now, and always will be, dependent for its routes to the ocean upon railways alone. * * * The channels of trade make themselves. * * * Your Committee believes we must in the future depend, as we undoubtedly do at the present, very largely upon the railway as a chief means of internal commerce. * * *

"The remedy, then, is to build a railroad upon a new system, to build it for freight, to shorten the distances, to reduce and equalize the grades, to expend capital wisely and courageously in judicious location and bold construction, so as to save in operation, and thus, by increasing the capacity of the motive power, to reduce rates, and depend for profits upon largely increased business

"The difficulty has always been in crossing the Alleghenies. * * * Is there no practical line, shorter, better, and capable of supplying the needs of the hour? Your Committee, from the information before it, believes that there is. * * * Your Committee is satisfied that this railroad, if built upon the terms and conditions specified to be observed by it in the bill on which its report is founded, will go far toward solving the question of cheap transportation for the vast area of the country over which its influence will be felt, and will, in a large degree, regulate other railroads now existing, or which may be created within the same area."

Vital as is the dependence upon relief from our hazardous position, may we not look forward to the future with composure, seeing that two so effective avenues of relief remain available? (Applause)

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